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August 2, 1977 DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR

Prime Minister L.F.S. Burnham
Office of Prime Minister
Government Buildings
Brickbar
Georgetown, Guyana

Dear Mr. Prime Minister:

I am writing to express my concern for the work which ~~The Reverend Jim Jones~~ and the members of his Peoples Temple (Disciples of Christ) perform in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ. As happens all too frequently, when someone actually attempts to live out the commandments of the Christian Gospel, there is adverse reaction from the non-Christian community. And even, sometimes, from within that same community.

Peoples Temple in San Francisco has recently found itself under attack from a few persons who were former members, in addition to a few others who wish to discredit the work and ministry of Peoples Temple - for whatever their motives. I do not attempt to understand or speak to the motives behind these actions; however, I can and will speak to my observations as to the ministry of The Rev. Jim Jones and his congregation.

Rev. Jones is a member of the Board of Directors of the San Francisco Council of Churches, and also serves as chairperson of the Housing Authority in San Francisco. Listening to him speak at our Martin Luther King Anniversary celebration held at Peoples Temple, I felt a deep and sincere commitment to Christ's work in our time. This feeling has been enhanced many times upon other occasions.

For example, in the mission work there in Guayana with the youngsters, I know from my own personal experience as a former director of adolescent group homes for emotionally disturbed teenagers that having a setting such as the mission there in Guayana would be most beneficial to the development of the youths concerned. There is a challenge and a beauty. There is a community, and yet a need to develop independence. In short, an ideal place for working with young people who need assistance to come into power over their God-given talents - within a community of loving and knowledgeable persons.

I am grateful that Peoples Temple, and Rev. Jones, are a part of our community here at the Council.

Sincerely yours,

Rev. Norman E. Leach, D.Min.
SFCC Program Administrator

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